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THE LAST OF THE PROSERPINE.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

'HILLOA! mister,' exclaimed a husky voice in my ear; 'jest help me to a cigar-light, will you—this coon has lost his fusees.'

My reverie, as I stood moodily at the edge of the rickety landing-stage at Grand Gulf, kicking over maple-chips into the coffee-coloured flood of the Mississippi, as it seethed and swirled beneath, was roughly interrupted by this unceremonious address, and I turned, perhaps with some impatience of manner, towards the speaker. The recognition, as our eyes met, was instant and mutual.

'Why, Mainwaring, you here—of all locations! Nothing new—no counter-orders, eh?' such was the greeting of my former acquaintance.

'Surely, Gregg,' I returned with a smile, 'I might be as much astonished to the full at meeting you here, as you could possibly be at seeing me. I thought you were in China.'

Mr, or Captain Gregg laughed a little awkwardly as he seated himself on a log that had rolled from the wood-pile that stood ready for the supply of passing steamers, and bade the negro porter who carried his slender baggage set down the bag and valise at his feet. 'Yes, I ought to have been there. Gospel true that, mister. But—you know my old enemy, the bosom-serpent, as I may say,' he continued in a tone that was half jesting and half apologetic—'in fact, I did too much of this,' and he lifted the hollow of his hand to his lips, and went through the pantomime of drinking; 'it was my watch, one moonlight night, when the first-mate came on deck, and found the sails a-shiver, the ship out of her course, and the helmsman taking a social pannikin of grog with your humble servant, while a lad was at the wheel. It wasn't discipline, I know that; but I give you my word, Britisher, that if they had met my excuses in a gentlemanly spirit, I'd have kept as sober as a judge, and as bright as a beagle, all the rest of the voyage. They chose to clap me in irons.

Then, when they liberated me, there was a muss, and the first-mate, that I blamed more than the skipper—you remember the sour old Aberdeen man—got an ugly knock with my brass knuckle-dusters. So the long and the short of it is that the second officer of the good ship *Benjamin Franklin* was set ashore at Rio to make his way back to the States as he could. And here I am.'

'I am sorry for it,' said I gently; 'for a better seaman seldom trod a plank, and if it were not for that unlucky habit to which you have alluded, you would have found the berth a good one, and your employers kind and liberal.'

Gregg's manner changed at once. 'You are a good fellow, Mainwaring,' he said, 'and I am—what you please. I tried to swagger out of it, but I do assure you I felt more ashamed of myself, for abusing your kindness as I did, when first I set eyes on you here, than I have done since I ran away from school, up yonder in Rhode Island. Yes, old chap, you helped to pay for my outfit, and it was your recommendation that got me made second-mate of yonder three-master, and I was a blackguard to kick over the traces after you had done so much to help me out of the mire. Never mind; it will be all one a hundred years hence;' and with another abrupt transition of manner, he drew a shining little flask from his pocket, and swallowed a considerable portion of the raw spirits which it contained, and then turned away his handsome, reckless face, his bloodshot eyes, and streaming dark hair, towards the river, and hummed a tune, to which he beat time with one sun-burned hand on the mossy logs beside him.

A word of explanation as to the relative positions of Paul Merriam Gregg and of myself, Alfred Mainwaring. The former was one of those young fellows, clever, audacious, well educated, but not over-burdened by scruples, of whom so many are sent forth from the populous hives of the Northern Atlantic States. Of his parentage and early history I knew little, but from hints that he sometimes let drop, I conjectured him to be a truant member of a respectable and well-to-do family in his native place. Good manners he had done his best to

discard, but his ability was undoubted, and his courage no less so. He had thrice risen to the command of small vessels employed in the coasting-trade, and had been a New Orleans pilot, mate and afterwards captain of more than one Mississippi steamer, book-keeper in a store, bar-keeper at a great hotel, overseer of a plantation, and engineer of a Mexican mine, all of which situations he had forfeited through sheer misconduct.

Intemperance, wilful disobedience of orders, and the unchecked whimsicality of his capricious nature, were the chief faults of this born Bohemian, since, lax as were his principles, he had never, so far as I knew, been taxed with actual dishonesty. But these drawbacks were too heavy to be got over, even in the case of a man of such dauntless resolution and readiness as Gregg possessed. There is no country in which a clever and helpful young fellow can, when American born, get so many new chances of mending his past errors by a fresh start in life as in the States, but at last every channel of employment had appeared to be closed to this born Bohemian. My own introduction to him was on this wise. Having foolishly ventured, through the promptings of idle curiosity, into one of those gambling dens which are the disgrace of New Orleans, a 'muss,' or affray, had been got up by the hangers-on of the establishment, for the purpose of hustling and robbing the English stranger, who declined to be plundered by the more pacific means of marked cards and loaded dice. Beset by bullies armed with sling-shot and sharp knives, it would have fared but ill with me but for my finding an unexpected ally in Gregg, who came chivalrously to the rescue, and thanks to whose experience in such brawls I escaped with only a few bruises as keepsakes, by which to remember the adventure. This good turn I had done my best, when opportunity served, to repay, and it had indeed been through my intercession that Gregg had been allowed to ship as second officer on that voyage that had so prematurely terminated.

As for myself, Alfred Mainwaring, I was at that time six-and-twenty years of age, and probably Gregg's junior by a twelvemonth. I had been four years in America, and had spent two of them in the counting-house of a respectable and wealthy mercantile firm at Memphis, some hundreds of miles higher up the Mississippi. The house was known as that of Harman Brothers, but there was in reality but one member of it who bore that name, the sole interest having lapsed to Mr Anthony Harman, nephew of the original heads of the firm, and himself an elderly man, and a widower with one child. This was a daughter, Alice Harman, who returned from completing her education at an English school, about a year after I first entered into her father's employ. And then—and then it was the old story, where two young people, thrown much into one another's society, and with many tastes and sympathies in common, find acquaintance ripen into friendship, and friendship warm into love, almost before those principally concerned are aware of the transition. Mr Harman was not a very vigilant parent, and indeed American manners permit so much liberty to young people that the old-fashioned lynx-eyed supervision, of which so much still exists in Europe, is practically unknown. He never, accordingly, threw the slightest obstacle in the

way of my intimacy with Miss Harman, nor did he notice the preference which she accorded me; but when I ventured to ask his consent to our engagement, the anger and irritation that he shewed would have done credit to some hard-hearted father of the days of Mrs Radcliffe's romances.

Mr Anthony Harman was not, usually, of a choleric disposition. He was, especially for a Southerner, a well-read man, had travelled much in Europe, and was proud of the polish which he had acquired during years of residence in the cities of the Old World. To myself he had been hospitable and polite, and to Alice he was an indulgent, if not an affectionate father; but at the suggestion that his daughter should marry 'beneath her' in espousing a poor man, he grew literally furious, and all the old prejudices of the Southern slave-owner, dormant hitherto, blazed up into fierce vitality.

'Marry Alice!' he exclaimed angrily. 'A daughter of mine, and the heiress of Harman Brothers, whose signature is as good as bank-paper on the New Orleans Exchange, throw herself away on a beggar! By heavens, sir, she shall be a beggar herself, like the poor white trash starving about the townships, if she demeans herself by speaking to you again—to my clerk, sir.—What's that you say, sir, about being a gentleman? as if I were to blame for your effete old British customs of primogeniture, or that the acres have gone to your eldest brother. You may go back to England, Mr Mainwaring, and call yourself a gentleman, but you are a mean white here; and I find I've been cherishing a viper beside my hearth in fostering you beneath this roof of mine.'

For this unwarrantable language, wrung from him at the first outbreak of his wrath, Mr Harman presently made some apology; but that we should be friends henceforth, or that I should continue to be his clerk, was clearly impossible. Oddly enough, the old man, his first anger spent, would willingly have retained me with him, on condition, of course, that I should renounce, and that Alice should forget, what he was pleased to style my absurd pretensions.

'The girl is only a child—not twenty yet,' he said, twisting the heavy links of his watch-chain; 'and she has plenty of time before her. She will get over this nonsensical fancy (and indeed it was no more, though I admit that you acted honourably, Alfred, in coming so frankly to me to make the avowal of this—folly), and marry—hem! hem! some suitable person—no hurry, though; and if you will give me your word to think no more of this — Ah, well, if you refuse to be reasonable, part we must, and I am sorry for it, Mainwaring, for as a clerk and friend you pleased me very well—but as a son-in-law, never!'

I believe the old man really did like me. I was useful to him in his affairs, and he had a high opinion of my business capacity, while out of office-hours we had had many a pleasant conversation together; but till the announcement that Alice and I were lovers, I had only seen the smooth side of my employer's nature. That he was a very proud man, I partly knew, but I had underrated, it would seem, the strength of those prejudices which planters and merchants, the purse-proud aristocracy of a slave-holding community, entertain with reference to the 'poor' or 'mean' whites around them.

All over America the man with dollars is prone to regard the man without dollars as a being inferior to himself; and this feeling, strong even in speculative New York, where fortunes can be built up or overthrown like so many card-castles, is doubly powerful in the territorial families who share among them the lands of the fertile South. The Harmans were not only merchants, but extensive land-owners as well, although their estates, injured by war and by the withdrawal of enforced black labour, were not in a flourishing state. Under these circumstances, old Mr Anthony, when he heard that a subordinate of his own aspired to the hand of Miss Harman, was nearly as indignant at my presumption as a feudal baron could have been had some suitor of humble origin presented himself, with empty hands, to ask for a noble bride.

All this had taken place three months previously, and I had left Memphis with a heavy heart and scanty hopes to cheer me in the future. The memory of Alice's tearful adieu haunted me none the less sadly because I had so little reason to deem that the course of our true love would ever falsify the proverb by running smoothly. I was poor, and had no particular prospects of bettering my position. Some pittance almost too small to be thought worthy the attention of a Chancellor of the Exchequer levying income-tax, I had over and above my earnings, but that was all, for I was one of several cadets of a numerous family sent out to push our fortunes, as best we might; while the old hall of weather-stained red brick, and the old trees in what was called the park, and the mortgaged acres, had passed to our elder brother, who had sundry olive branches of his own to provide for. I had industrious habits and a robust constitution, and was not one to bewail that circumstances debarred me from eating the bread of idleness. Work honestly done and fairly paid for is, after all, a healthy tonic for mind and body, and I should never have grumbled at my condition in life, had it not been made the pretext for my being separated from Alice.

I paced to and fro, looking out from time to time for the smoke of the coming steamer; and my reflections were none of the pleasantest. Would Alice learn to forget me? Would time and absence gradually efface the image of her lost lover, and some more eligible suitor finally supplant me in her affections? She was not one likely to forget, or to give her heart and take it back again at the bidding of caprice; and I could have placed full reliance on her constancy had my own prospects been less hopeless than they were. Had Alice been poor, and less tenderly nurtured, there would, in that land of abundance, have been hope that ours might be a life of at least moderate comfort and prosperity. But the dear girl had never hitherto known what it was to have a wish ungratified that money could realise, and it would have been selfish on my part to expose her to the hardships of poverty; while, even if she had been capable of direct disobedience to her father's commands, I felt assured that Mr Harman would never relent, or extend a helping hand to one who had defied his authority. As matters stood, a continued sojourn in America had become distasteful to me; and although fully sensible that there is much truth in the old proverb which condemns a rolling stone, I had determined on tempting fortune in that part of the world where riches are

amassed and health jeopardised with, perhaps, greater rapidity than anywhere else. I had distant connections in China, on whose aid I could in some degree rely, and had obtained, for the outward voyage, the temporary post of supercargo on board a fine ship, the *Star of the South*, bound from New Orleans to California and Shanghai. My kit was ready. In one short week the clipper was to sail, and my business up the river, such as it was, had been all transacted. Some few hundred dollars I had contrived to save, and these had been out at interest in a Vicksburg bank, the manager of which had invited me to spend a couple of days at his villa near Grand Gulf, and had driven me over, with the money safe in my pocket, to the landing-wharf of the latter town, at the termination of my visit. I had but to return to New Orleans, bid farewell to the few kind friends who dwelt in that city, and then leave America, perhaps for ever.

I had almost forgotten the presence of my not over-reputable acquaintance, Captain Gregg, when I found myself opposite to him as I walked slowly to and fro, and observed that his eyes were fixed on me with rather a singular expression. It was early, as yet, in the day, but he had evidently been drinking a good deal; and, curiously enough, the repeated doses of alcohol which he had swallowed seemed to have at length produced the effect of steadying his nerves. His hand no longer shook, and the unwholesome flush on his bronzed cheek had passed away.

'Going up river, are you not?' he asked abruptly. 'I see the steamer rounding the point yonder—the *Empire City*, by her colours—a fine boat, and sure to have a band on board of her.'

'No,' I answered; 'my way lies down stream; I take the first steamer for New Orleans, and, if I am not mistaken, they are signalling her now.'

An exclamation of mingled pain and anger, half curse, half moan, broke from Gregg's lips as I spoke, and then he jumped up from the log on which he had been seated, and took one or two hasty strides backwards and forwards on the quay. 'No, no! hang it, no!' I heard him mutter to himself as he passed me. 'If it had been any other living soul, I'd have cared no more than for the empty shuck of a cotton-pod, but this is too much to stand.' He grew calmer after a moment or two, and then came up and laid his muscular brown hand on my sleeve. 'Mainwaring,' he said, 'I'll take it kind of you if you will go back into the town to the hotel, or anywhere, and put off your sailing till the afternoon. The *Sunflower* comes by at about two, or three at latest, and—'

'But why,' said I, interrupting his hesitating speech, 'am I to wait till then; or what earthly benefit, Gregg, could I confer upon yourself by simply upsetting all my arrangements, and arriving several hours later than is necessary? If you can give me any reason—'

'Ah,' rejoined my nautical acquaintance, insensibly resuming his old quaint recklessness of manner and diction, 'that's jest what I can't do. There's a saying I have heard among Texan trappers, that a nod's as good as a wink to a blind mustang.'

I could not help laughing at having this scrap of ancestral philosophy presented to me in transatlantic garb; and as I contemplated Gregg, whose momentary embarrassment seemed to be at an end,

I conjectured that—unless, indeed, he were the agent of an opposition packet-company—his objection to my pursuing my southward journey by the first available boat was the mere whim of a liquor-soddened brain. Presently, up came the two steamers, almost simultaneously. The upward-bound boat, the *Empire City*, as Gregg had opined, was the first to come snorting and splashing up to the landing-stage. A fine steamer she was; very full of passengers, for in that season of sultry heat most of the Upper Ten Thousand of the South are glad to take flight from New Orleans; and, with her snow-white awning and gay flags flaunting in the warm breeze, the lively music of her German band ringing blithely out, and the flutter of muslin and many-coloured silk on her hurricane-deck, she looked a floating temple of pleasure.

The upward-bound boat having taken in her wood and provisions, and such goods as were awaiting transmission towards the North, dashed merrily off again, the bubbling water spurting upwards like a fountain as her sharp prow cut razor-like through the strong rush of the tawny river. Then, before the echoes of the last air of Offenbach's had died away, I saw close to us the thin blue line of wood-smoke that streamed behind the down-going steamer. She was heavily laden, and deep in the water; but even with the advantage of the Mississippi current her progress was not very swift, and there were but few passengers visible, though this, during the hottest month of summer, was not surprising in a boat going South. The steamer was gaudily painted, and was further embellished with a splendid figure-head, bright with gold-leaf and colour, and her funnels, and awning, and flags, were of the newest and most brilliant; but I thought that her engines worked slowly, and that there was something lumbering and clumsy in her way of getting through the water.

'Do you know that boat?' I asked of Gregg.

'The *Proserpine*,' he replied, half sullenly, half defiantly, as I fancied.

'The *Proserpine*!' I answered incredulously. 'Surely not! Why, she was an old boat, worn out, and given up as incurable and useless. Who in his senses would have dragged her out of dock again, and furnished her up? It seems as bad as painting some venerable grandmother into the semblance of a girl of sixteen.'

'She belongs now to Harman Brothers,' said Gregg, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

I heard this announcement with the utmost surprise. My former employer's firm had been always averse to that wild game of speculation that reaches its apogee west of the Atlantic. Safe, prudent traffickers, content with moderate gains, Harman Brothers had prided themselves on their avoidance of 'gambling investments and adventurous hazards. They had held their own by adherence to their own old system, while colossal fortunes had grown and collapsed all around them. And now Mr Anthony Harman was, if my informant spoke truly, the owner of so rickety a craft as the superannuated *Proserpine*, and had freighted her with a heavy, and no doubt a costly cargo.

'I only hope,' said I, half jokingly, 'that the captain does not match the boat!'

'I command the *Proserpine*,' retorted Gregg, with a strange look in his haggard eyes, a strange ring in his hoarse voice.

I started as this declaration reached my ears. There was something very odd about the whole transaction. Here was a vessel which, to my knowledge, had been laid aside as unfit for service, pressed into activity once more, and bedizened like some antique bride whose Honiton lace and orange blossoms contrast painfully with the wrinkles and grizzled locks of the wearer. She was now the property, of all people, of Harman Brothers! I was about to take my passage in her, and that in spite of the apparently motiveless dissuasions of the very man who was to be her captain. The very fact that Paul, so recently and disgracefully dismissed from his post as second-mate of a China-bound merchantman, should suddenly be intrusted with so responsible a position as that of skipper of a Mississippi first-class passenger-steamer, seemed to me not the least surprising of this tissue of incidents. To be sure, he had previously discharged the same duties, but that was before his fatal habit of intemperance had gained so complete a mastery over him, and before his reputation as a reliable man had sunk so low. Mr Harman must have strangely altered, I bethought me, when he intrusts valuable possessions to the care of Paul Merriam Gregg and to the frail planks of the *Proserpine*.

The boat now came panting up; and as the bell rang, and the porters and stevedores, white and black, began to thrust out planks, over which the neat white kegs bearing the brand of some Northern manufacturer of biscuits, whisky, or conserve of apples, the hams, sugar-casks, and logs of wood, might be carried on board, there was somewhat more of bustle than had hitherto prevailed on the somewhat lonely quay. I was in the act of stepping across the gangway, when Gregg, who had followed me, touched me on the shoulder. 'Mainwaring,' he said, very earnestly, 'I feel kinder soft towards the one man who has never turned his back yet on a scampish never-do-well like P. M. G.—towards the friend who has striven to save me from ruin. Keep clear of this ship. Ask no questions, but wait for the next vessel; and never blab, when it's over, that I advised you as I have done.'

For an instant I hesitated. Gregg's words were an enigma to me, but there was something in his tone that impressed me in spite of myself, and I might perhaps have retired, had not a pert boat-clerk, with the strong nasal accent of New Jersey, at this instant exclaimed: 'Wall, stranger, are you for New Orleans, or are you not? Faint heart, I guess, never won fair lady; but if you don't make your mind up pretty slick, the paddles will save you the trouble.' And indeed the wild snorting of the steam-pipes, and the suppressed throbbing of the vessel's sides as her engines began to work, gave token of immediate departure. Half mechanically, I went on board. Gregg brushed past me. The planks were withdrawn, and off we went on our way down-stream.

'Mr Jowlett, the pilot, had the barky in charge so far as Grand Gulf,' a grinning mulatto waiter, whose teeth were whiter than his napkin, informed me in answer to my inquiry; 'and when he go ashore, we pick up our skipper, Cap'n Gregg.' The latter was already installed in command, and I observed that, as he gave his orders in a loud and clear voice, all traces of excitement had vanished from his face and bearing, and that he seemed merely to be the careful and experienced mariner

to whom every reach and shoal of the Father of Waters was intimately known. He shewed no desire to resume his conversation with myself, and, in fact, appeared to have forgotten his late incomprehensible warning. But what was my amazement when, among the groups of passengers on the lofty hurricane-deck of the steamer, I recognised old Mr Harman, with his daughter beside him! The old man, a stately figure yet, tall and erect, and scrupulously well dressed, reddened as he caught sight of me, and, with a cold bow, turned away, leading Alice with him towards another part of the deck. My own gaze had been riveted on the face that I loved best of all in the world, and I had noticed that a bright involuntary gleam of joy had crossed it as our eyes met, to be clouded the instant after, as, dropping her eyes and averting her head, she allowed her father to conduct her from the neighbourhood of the spot where I stood.

Here, then, was a new source of embarrassment. This unlucky rencontre might not unnaturally lead to misconception. Mr Harman might well believe that I had purposely followed his movements; while even to Alice my conduct, in wilfully throwing myself in her way, and in perhaps thereby arousing the angry suspicions of her father, must appear cruel and inconsiderate. Should I disembark at the next stopping-place, and there await the *Sunflower*, by which I might pursue my solitary way to New Orleans? No, surely; for such a step would argue that I felt myself to be in the wrong; that I acknowledged my own unworthiness to pretend to the hand of a rich man's daughter; that I shrank from the displeasure of my former employer. No; up to this time my conduct had been open and manly, and I resolved that for the future I would act as I had hitherto done. It was enough that I had not infringed the laws of hospitality, or used my influence over Alice so as to tempt her to set at nought the just authority of her only surviving parent. I need not slink off, like a culprit, because by pure accident she and I were passengers by the same steamer. No intrusion from me was to be feared. I should not even place myself in Miss Harman's path; and yet—and yet—all the while that I thus reasoned with myself I knew it was the chance of again looking on the dear face that I loved so well that pleaded with me to remain on board. Passengers in an American river-steamer, with their common meals, common saloons, and the breezy promenade of the hurricane-deck, are thrown very much together, and I should have more than one opportunity of seeing her to whom I was forbidden to speak.

The mulatto waiter, or under-steward, of whom I have already made mention, was, like most of his colour, given to chatter, and unreservedly communicative about himself and others. His name, he told me, was Lysander, to which classical prefix he had chosen to add the patronymic of Randolph, having been a 'boy' on Colonel Norman Randolph's estate before the war, during which he had played the part of a contraband, and had much to tell of the hardships and semi-starvation endured by runaway slaves on the other side of the Federal lines. He had been in the pantry of one of our West Indian mail-packets, and had visited England, and acquired a sort of Anglomaniya, which I have noticed before in creole blacks, who have been charmed to find their dark skin rather in the light

of a passport to English sympathies than a badge of inferiority. As a Britisher, he took me under his cordial protection, waited on me with patronising kindness, and whispered in my ear the names of those dishes of the long bill of fare which were, in his opinion, the choicest tit-bits of what was, I own, a very sumptuous dinner. I was not hungry, however, and Lysander presently grew tired of recommending some 'bootiful fis,' caught in a lake among the rocky hills of Tennessee, and brought in ice to the river-bank, or collops of 'black-tail venison, shot in Big Swamp, Arkansaw State,' and allowed me to dream away my time as I listed. Alice looked very beautiful, I thought, but sadder and more womanly than before, a thought paler too. She was very silent, and never looked towards me, nor did her father, who conversed, with, as it appeared to me, more than usual volubility, with some fellow-travellers who knew him. I could not help fancying that Mr Harman's seemingly high spirits were no index to his real state of mind, and the same might be said of Gregg, who was full of boastfulness and merriment at the other end of the table, but who carefully avoided catching my eye.

Deep in the afternoon, my mulatto friend Lysander brought me a crumpled letter, ill folded and hastily written, but heedfully sealed with black wax, 'from Massa Cap'n Gregg.' It contained merely these words: 'Do you remember a passage in a French book you lent me, where a coon got a note with this in it: "Fly—fly—fly!" three times repeated? He didn't take the hint—more fool he! The boat stops at Vidalia, and there is a good inn there.—P. M. G.'

I sat staring for some time at this extraordinary document. It certainly implied a warning, but of what evil could it bid me to beware?

WONDERS OF THE DEEP.

THANKS to Dr Carpenter and some other scientific explorers, we already know a good deal more of the sea—its depths, currents, temperature, density, and animal and vegetable life—than was known only a few years since; and if all goes well with the expedition of the *Challenger*, which recently left our shores, a knowledge of this department of science will ere long be materially extended. As regards the facts lately acquired, those who happen to be curious on a subject of so much interest should peruse the work lately published, *Depths of the Sea*,* by Dr C. Wyville Thomson, a goodly octavo, embellished with wood-engravings, and abounding in what we would call very pleasant reading. As among the many thousands we address, few may have an opportunity of seeing the book, we shall endeavour to give some idea of its character and purport.

A great advance was made in marine discovery by the late Professor Edward Forbes, from about 1843 to 1859. After that came the discoveries connected with the laying of telegraphic cables. Last of all, until the present time, are reckoned the researches made during the cruises of H.M. ships *Lightning* and *Porcupine*, in 1863, 1869, and

* London: Macmillan & Co. 1873.

1870. A large portion of the work concerns the cruises of these two vessels, both of which were well provided with apparatus for dredging at great depths in the ocean. The working of such apparatus is spoken of as a tedious and troublesome operation, requiring much skill and patience. The average depth to be reached is 'two thousand fathoms, or about two miles;' but in some places it 'exceeds between three thousand and four thousand fathoms.' Yet, at these vast profundities, where the pressure is enormous, and into which the sun's light scarcely penetrates, there is a profuse vegetable and animal life. How any animals can exist with a pressure on them of several tons on the square inch, seems almost incomprehensible. The phenomenon is explained by the fact that, as in the case of animals on the surface of the earth, the pressure is from within as well as from without the living creature. Calculated by their structure and habits to live in a density not easily conceivable, the deep-sea animals, such as star-fishes, die on being hauled up to the higher regions of the sea. It is even found that sharks brought up from a depth of no more than five hundred fathoms, receive their death-shock ere they reach the surface. What may be devised by science to preserve the life of deep-sea animals which are fished up, no one can tell; at present there seems little chance of securing specimens for exhibition in aquaria.

How animals can find food at the great depths mentioned, is another apparent mystery. Dr W. Thomson explains that 'all sea-water contains a certain quantity of organic matter in solution and in suspension,' such matter being produced by the inflow of rivers, and by the dying and decay of animal and vegetable substances. The sea-weeds which grow along the shores are also a source of animal food. As if to supplement this means of existence, nature has made a wonderful provision. 'In the middle of the Atlantic, there is a marine prairie, the "Sargasso Sea," extending over three millions of square miles.' Rather a strange thing this: a floating meadow in the middle of the ocean, through which ships plough their way; yet such, it seems, is the case. Another matter invites consideration. At great depths, from the weak influence of the sun, and an under-current from the polar regions, the cold is excessive, the temperature generally being at or a little above the freezing-point of fresh water. Sometimes, from the effect of contending warm and cold currents, along with the configuration of the shores or the sea-bottom, there are the phenomena of warm and cold patches of ocean, detected by letting down a thermometer, and by the feeling of heat or cold which is experienced. To accumulate correct information on these and kindred topics, was the object of the two expeditions, to which we shall now specially refer.

The *Lightning*, described as a surveying-ship, was an old paddle-steamer, which 'kept out the water imperfectly,' and was scarcely seaworthy; at least it was not a vessel calculated to encounter

stormy weather in hyperborean regions. However, off it went from Pembroke, 4th August 1868, and proceeded northwards by way of Oban and Stornoway. The two principal explorers on board were Dr Carpenter and Professor Thomson. Dredging was begun on quitting the Hebrides, but the weather proved far from favourable, and the cranky old steamer had a hard time of it. All over the sea which extends from the mainland of Scotland and Orkney and Shetland to the Faroe Islands, numerous soundings were taken. In an easterly direction from these islands, in latitude 60° to 62° N. are the Faroe Banks, lying at a depth of four hundred to about six hundred fathoms, and famed for their fishery of fresh cod for the London market. The fish caught are placed alive in a tank in the middle of the vessel, to which sea-water has access by holes in the sides. There the creatures swim about till they reach the Thames. They do not generally suffer in the voyage, but can scarcely be said to enjoy their confinement, for they are infested by all kinds of parasitic animals, and are fond of rubbing themselves against the sides of the tank. In one of these welled smacks, Professor Thomson saw a fish which, having met with an injury, was unsaleable, and had been allowed to make several trips between London and Faroe. It was quite a pet. 'The sailors said it knew them. It was mixed up with a number of others in the tank when I was on board, and certainly it was always the first to come to the top for the chance of a crab or a biscuit, and it rubbed its head and shoulders against my hand quite lovingly.' At Thorshavn, the chief town in the Faroe group, the explorers and officers of the vessel were hospitably entertained; the visit leaving many pleasant memories. Near the islands, some fine specimens of the sponge tribe were dredged up from the ooze of the deep sea. The illustrations offered of this the lowest genus of animal existence are exceedingly beautiful.

The cruise of the *Lightning* lasted six weeks, and was but moderately successful, owing to the generally boisterous weather; but the results justified a strong application to the Admiralty for a vessel to continue the deep-sea investigations next season. The request being acceded to, the surveying-ship *Porcupine*, a small but steady and thoroughly seaworthy vessel, was assigned for the service. The crew on board were chiefly tried men; and the dredging was superintended by Captain Calver, assisted by other experienced officers. To accommodate the different scientific men engaged, the *Porcupine* took three cruises, extending from early in May to the middle of September. In these three expeditions in 1869, a great stretch of sea was traversed, from the west coasts of England, Ireland, France, Scotland, and the northern islands, part of the same ground being gone over as in the cruise of 1868. The discoveries were accordingly much more varied and important. The depths reached in dredging were also greater, and were conclusive as regards the existence of animal life at 2435 fathoms. Many of the zoophytes brought up in the dredge-bag were brilliantly phosphorescent. Some were so luminous that in the dark they emitted a light sufficient for shewing the hour on the face of a watch; and it might almost be conjectured that this inherent luminosity at the bottom of the sea compensated

for the absence of sunlight underneath the huge rolling waters.

The third in the series of cruises, which was under the direction of Dr Carpenter, left Stornoway on the 4th August. Again there were some satisfactory dredgings near the Faroe Islands; some parts reached were teeming with echinoderms, creatures resembling a kind of purse with projecting spines. Star-fishes of new species, and lobster-shaped crustaceans, were also numerous.

The character of the animals hauled up depended considerably on the temperature; the warm and cold parts having each its own kind of life. The colder regions seem to have been under the influence of under-currents from the frigid polar seas. One day, by a haul from a depth of four hundred and forty-five fathoms, a prize was secured, which we leave the Professor to describe. 'As the dredge was coming in, we got a glimpse from time to time of a large scarlet urchin in the bag. We thought it was one of the highly-coloured forms of *Echinus flemingii*, of unusual size. We were somewhat surprised when it rolled out of the bag uninjured; and our surprise increased, and was certainly in my case mingled with a certain amount of nervousness, when it settled down quietly in the form of a round red cake, and began to pant—a line of conduct, to say the least of it, very unusual in its rigid, undemonstrative order. Yet, there it was, with all the ordinary characters of a sea-urchin—its rows of tube feet radiated from a centre—and 'its spines, and five sharp blue teeth.' Some trepidation was felt in taking up this round, soft animal into the hand. From the wood-engraving which accompanies the description, the creature would in shape seem to resemble a round penny bun, set all over with legs and spikes, with its mouth in the middle of the disc. One can fancy the strange appearance of these round, scarlet, penny bun-like creatures rambling about the bottom of the ocean; more particularly if we associate them with sponges and other queer productions of half-vegetable and half-animal constitution. Animals shaped like miniature cart-wheels without the rim, seem to be pretty common, and so likewise are creatures with eyes in projecting stalks; the eyes in such cases, however, being liable to be shifted to other parts of the animal, according to circumstances—certainly an instance of visual modification we are not accustomed to on dry land.

After narrating the cruises of the *Porcupine*, Professor Thomson devotes several chapters to the method of deep-sea sounding, and an account of the apparatus employed. This part of the work may be advantageously perused by naturalists who wish to pursue dredging operations. To reach depths such as are referred to in the volume, a derrick and donkey-engine are indispensable, and it is necessary to have ropes upwards of three miles in length. The thermometers employed require to be self-registering, and so protected as to resist the prodigious pressure to which they are subjected.

Following an account of these mechanical appliances, there is a long chapter on the currents in the Atlantic, especially that vast oceanic river of warm water called the Gulf Stream, on which much first and last has been written. The investigations made in the *Lightning* and *Porcupine* have enabled the writer to bring

personal knowledge to a treatment of this interesting subject, and as his observations are illustrated by a coloured chart, we are afforded a good idea of the manner in which the stream and counter-currents wind and cross in different directions.

The Gulf Stream may be considered as beginning on the west coast of Africa, within the region of the trade-winds. These winds cause a flow of the surface waters towards the west, which is known as the Equatorial Current. When this current reaches the coast of Brazil, the greater portion bends to the north, carrying with it the waters of the Amazon and Orinoco. The accumulated current now passes through the Caribbean Sea into the Gulf of Mexico. Here this mass of waters, warm from the African and equatorial regions, is confined in a great circular basin, fifteen hundred miles in diameter, into which no northern counter-current can penetrate, and is further heated, until it rushes out through the only outlet, the Strait of Florida, with a force which carries it a certain distance along the North American shores, whence the stream crosses the Atlantic towards the northern coast of Europe; there being at the same time a corresponding return flow underneath from the arctic regions. The temperature of the Gulf Stream, when it starts, is from 83 degrees in summer to 77 degrees in winter; and even after reaching the Banks of Newfoundland, there is a difference in a winter day between its water and the surrounding ocean of 20 to 30 degrees.

It is obvious that if but a portion of this comparatively warm stream were to come unbroken and unmixed upon our western shores, it would greatly modify the general temperature. The stream, however, as is now ascertained, is thinned out almost to a film by the time it reaches the middle of the Atlantic, and its initial velocity and distinctive heat are materially modified. No doubt, the comparatively mild and moist climate on the west coasts of Ireland and Scotland is due to warm ocean-currents; but there is some difference of opinion as to the exact part which the Gulf Stream plays in this. Dr Carpenter and others believe that a more general cause is at work. 'On working up the temperature results of the *Porcupine* expedition of 1869, Dr Carpenter satisfied himself that the mass of comparatively warm water, eight hundred feet deep, which we had established as existing, and probably moving in a north-easterly direction, along the west coasts of Britain and the Lusitanian peninsula, could not be an extension of the Gulf Stream, but must be due to a general circulation of the waters of the ocean comparable with the circulation of the atmosphere.' This general circulation is presumed to be caused by difference of temperature; the cold waters of the polar regions are constantly sinking down and flowing southward along the bottom of the ocean, while the warmer and lighter waters on the surface of the tropical and temperate regions flow northwards to take their place. The direction of these currents is seldom directly north, or directly south, owing to the rotation of the earth and a variety of other causes. Thus the general set of the surface waters of the North Atlantic is towards the north-east, carrying comparative mildness and moisture, and even drift-wood and fruits of the West Indies, to the shores of Lapland, Spitzbergen, and Nova Zembla.

We unfortunately have not space to pursue this

interesting subject, which is treated in its various details in the work before us. The book is an important contribution to physical science, and we cordially recommend it for attentive perusal.

W. C.

FROM DOVER TO CALAIS.

THE 'strip of silver sea' which is in some respects of so much service to England, enabling us to do without the large armies which are the curse of continental states, has, nevertheless, like all other good things, its disadvantages, and just now a number of serious efforts are being made to obviate them. How shall we conquer that sea-sickness which exacts so heavy a penalty from crossers of the Channel? Conquered it certainly must be, and the great question appears to be, whether we can avoid the treacherous element altogether, or so construct our ships that those who journey in them shall not be affected by its movements. Various means of meeting the difficulty have been proposed, some of them utterly impracticable, others of such magnitude that their completion would occupy ten or fifteen years. They may all be divided into two classes—the one proposing to dispense with ships; the other, which is of more immediate interest, proposing improved classes of ships for the service. The present steamers are acknowledged by all to be inadequate for the work. They are small, and consequently are affected by moderate as well as by heavy seas, ill ventilated, cramped, confined, although it may certainly be said for them that they are cheap, handy, and seaworthy. Nor are the evils confined to the voyage itself; the arrangements for the embarkation and landing of passengers and luggage are most unpleasant and unsatisfactory. An official Board of Trade Report in 1869 says, and the same may be said still: 'There is nowhere any sea-service of equal importance which is so much in need of improvement.' It is not that plans have been wanting—on the contrary, they have been produced in abundance, and the improvement of the Channel passage has been as favourite a pursuit of imaginative inventors as aerial navigation or submarine boats. We remember, some years since, seeing a drawing of a proposed iron tube to be immersed a sufficient distance below the surface for ships to pass over it, and to be buoyed up at intervals by floating towers, each of which was to be a light-house. Its projector must surely have obtained his ideas of the violence of the waves from a trip in a penny boat on the Thames. Another scheme is to build a viaduct, five hundred feet above the sea, and supported by columns at such a distance apart that ships could safely pass between them. It is calculated that nearly two hundred such supports would be required, and the whole bridge would cost some thirty millions. Another idea is a causeway with openings for the passage of ships, and swing-bridges at the openings. Of this it has been well said that after a south-west gale it would be strewn with wreck from end to end.

Descending from the region of imagination, we will spend but a few words upon the two schemes of tunnelling which appear within the region of practicability. It has been proposed to place a tunnel upon, and also to bore one underneath the bed of the sea. The successful completion of the Mont Cenis tunnel has induced most engineers to believe in the possibility of tunnelling the Channel passage, which, although between two and three times the length, would be through a softer rock. Against the advantage of having to bore through chalk instead of stone, must, however, be set the extra trouble which would inevitably be caused by leakage. Still there seems to be no insurmountable obstacle in the way of a submarine railway between England and France, and a connection of this character would, if successful, possess undoubted advantages over every other means of communication. Trains running through between London and Paris without break would secure nearly all the first-class passenger traffic, and a certain portion of the goods-trade, which now does not even go by train to Dover, but by steamer from London to French and Belgian ports. It must not, however, be supposed that the steamers would be altogether beaten off the line by any improved communication between Dover and Calais. Steamers, in spite of our great railway accommodation, secure a large coasting-trade between various English and Scotch ports, and it appears only reasonable to suppose, that however much the direct communication between England and the continent may be improved, it will still be cheaper to send coal and heavy goods by ship than by train. Although the verdict of the engineering world has been given in favour of the practicability of a railway tunnel under the Channel, and it is possible that at some future date the work will be undertaken, it appears pretty certain that the day has not nearly arrived yet, and even if it were commenced at once, a considerable time, most likely ten or fifteen years, must elapse before it could be completed. Hence, therefore, any improved system of ship-transit would stand a double chance: it might prove, all things considered, as advantageous as a submarine railway, and it would undoubtedly have a clear field for a long time.

A sort of compromise has been suggested between railway and steamboat conveyance across the Channel. It has been proposed to build ships into which whole trains may be run with passengers and luggage, and again drawn out on the other side, so that all can go from London to Paris without change of carriage. It is not intended that passengers should keep their seats throughout the voyage; on the contrary, refreshment cabins, a promenade deck, &c. are to be provided; only the trouble of embarkation and landing is to be avoided; and goods are to be packed either in England or the continent, and travel intact to their destination. Mr Fowler is known as the promoter of one of these plans; Mr Scott Russell and M.

Dupuy de Lôme are the proposers of another. It has been objected to the idea of carrying trains across the sea, that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to run them on board the steamer in rough weather, unless the vessel were put in a closed dock for the purpose; and it has also been said that it would not be an easy task to so secure a heavy train on board ship that it should not be moved in a rough sea. The very special provision found to be necessary for lashing the guns in war-ships, and the great damage which has been done by guns breaking loose in bad weather, and running about the deck, have been cited in support of the latter objection. There appears, however, to be little doubt that trains can, by a special mechanical contrivance, be properly secured; and although running them into a ship in rough weather is a performance out of the range of all past experience, it is scarcely likely to present any insurmountable difficulties. It has also been said, that if a heavy train is carried on the deck of a vessel it will make her top-heavy. To this it may at once be replied, that a ship of the size contemplated can be designed to carry safely a much greater weight than a railway train upon her deck; and if such were not the case, it would be possible to provide machinery for the purpose of lowering the train into the hold. Trains are, it may be stated, in some places carried across rivers in the United States, but no inference can be drawn from this as to the capabilities of a train-ferry across the Strait of Dover—in the one case, smooth water is uniformly certain; in the other, it is a rare chance.

The harbour question presents the great difficulty which has hitherto been either the reason or the excuse for the present inadequate service of steamers. Another sea-passage, next in importance to it—that, namely, from Holyhead to Kingstown—is most admirably served by fast and commodious boats, which are often spoken of as the best coasting-steamers in the world. But the Dublin mail-boats draw fifteen feet of water, and the present Channel steamers only seven, and this cannot be much exceeded. The splendid harbour and Admiralty Pier at Dover furnish ample accommodation for the largest steamers that can be required; but on the French coast the case is altogether different, and there seems little chance of remedy, except at immense cost. Considerable sums of money have from time to time been spent in improving Calais harbour, but with little permanent result, owing to the constant accumulation of sand. The French harbours are also so small that larger steamers than those in use at present could not turn round in them. What M. Dupuy de Lôme and his English coadjutor propose to do, by way of meeting this difficulty, is to make an island at some distance out at sea, with a harbour inside it, and a causeway and bridge connecting it with the mainland. As the harbour is only for steamers, it would have a narrow entrance placed on the side next the shore, and thus there would not be much rough water in it, however the sea might be outside. They propose to place the island about a mile and three-quarters from the shore; the distance between ordinary low-water mark and the island (about five-eighths of a mile) being the length of the bridge. The projectors of this plan estimate the cost of the harbour at something under a million. The works at Dover, where

there is already forty feet of water alongside the pier, will be comparatively trifling.

Lastly, we come to the consideration of plans for ships to be used with the present harbour accommodation, and it must again be said that these have one important element of success: they can be tried and used as soon as the ships can be built, and thus must have the start of other schemes. A ship can be built in a few months; harbours take years to make; and a submarine tunnel would occupy a still longer period. Two designs for ships to enter the present harbours have been for some time before the public, each claiming to save time in the passage, and to neutralise the evils of sea-sickness. One of these is the twin-ship, proposed by Captain Dacey: the essential feature of the other is a swinging-saloon, invented by Mr Bessemer, to be carried in a ship especially designed for the purpose by Mr Reed, the late Chief Constructor of the Navy.

The twin-ship is really two half-ships placed at some distance apart, with their curved sides outwards, and connected for a certain portion of their length by an iron structure, upon which is the deck. The inner sides are vertical planes parallel to each other. There is thus between them a straight channel of uniform breadth, unbroken save by a large paddle-wheel in the middle, by which the ship is to be propelled. Twin-ships have been actually built and tried upon both English and American rivers, but not, it is said, upon the open sea; and one special feature of the proposed ship is the arrangement of the connecting structure, which in this case has to be made strong enough to meet the very severe strains to which it will be subjected in a heavy sea. According to statements which have been made public, the Dacey twin-ship is to be four hundred feet long, with a total breadth of sixty feet, of which thirty-five is taken up by the open channel. The connecting structure and the deck extend for about half the length. In two instances, twin-ships have been tried in British waters with results, it must be confessed, extremely unfavourable to the principle of propulsion by a centre-wheel. Some twenty years ago, the *Gemini* ran for a short time upon the Thames; and upon the Clyde, a few years after, one was built, and tried, named the *Alliance*. These were both so slow that they had to be withdrawn from the trade for which they were built: the *Alliance*, although her half was very much like the half-design of many fast river-steamers, and she had engines of the usual power, only attained an average speed of nine miles an hour. It must, however, be added, that one of the most prominent advocates of the twin-ship has said that the centre-wheel is not an essential feature, but that its claims are chiefly based upon the action of its peculiar construction in obviating the rolling motion which is one of the most important causes of sea-sickness.

In the course of the controversy caused by the rival claims of the two designs, the causes of sea-sickness have been subjected to a searching analysis, and all the various kinds of motion to which a ship is liable in a seaway have been investigated. The motions most commonly recognised are *rolling* and *pitching*. The former is the revolution of the ship about an axis in the direction of her length, and has been the subject of much scientific inquiry in connection with the performances of ironclads at sea. It is less felt, in all

but the heaviest seas, in ships of great breadth; and plates or planks, technically known as *bilge-keels*, are fitted at right angles to the bottoms of ships, and in the direction of their length, to check it, by the resistance which they offer to the water, when the ship has a tendency to roll. *Pitching* is the name given to the kind of motion shewn by the alternate rise and fall of the ends of the ship; in fact, it is longitudinal rolling. It is felt most in short vessels, and is nearly unappreciable in very long ships such as the *Great Eastern*. In both *rolling* and *pitching*, the ship merely revolves; there is not, necessarily, any change in her location. Besides this, the waves tend to move her bodily, in an irregular manner which is very distressing to a landsman. Small ships are moved sideways by the waves, and their progress through the water would be represented by curved lines with numerous sharp turns; but ships of the kind that are proposed for the Channel service would have sufficient *momentum* to carry them straight forward, and so would be free from this inconvenience, as well as from another source of evil produced by the ship receiving frequent sudden checks to her motion. That this last is no merely imaginative evil, is proved by a strange fact, recorded some little time ago in the *Scientific American*. An engine attached to a train on a railway in one of the Northern states was suddenly injured in such a way that it could only draw the train forward by jerks, and in consequence it was found that after a short time a large number of the passengers were suffering from a malady exactly resembling sea-sickness. The most important motion next to *rolling* is, however, the bodily rise and fall of the ship; and it is this which is said to give rise to that distressing feeling of *sinking* which is one of the worst elements of sea-sickness. This depends upon two distinct sources, one of which can be guarded against, but the other is to a large extent without a remedy. A first principle in hydrostatics is, that floating bodies displace their own weight of water; consequently, when a ship is inclined from the upright position, if she is of such a form that the newly immersed portion is temporarily larger than that which has emerged, the ship rises as a whole, and falls again as she resumes the upright position. This may, by a well-conceived design, be prevented, by making the ship of such a form that she has neither a tendency to rise nor fall as she rolls. Secondly, ships rise or fall if the waves are so large that the ship is at any time wholly or almost supported upon one wave. It is obvious that large ships are less liable to this motion than small ones, and it is confidently asserted that ships of three hundred and fifty feet long will only in extraordinary weather be subjected to any rising and falling motion in crossing the Channel. Whether or not the vibratory motion of a ship caused by the engines, has much to do with sea-sickness, is a disputed question; it certainly aggravates, if it does not produce it, and any arrangement which tends to remove this source of discomfort will be very acceptable to steam-boat passengers.

The twin-ship is intended to conquer the *rolling* evil by her great breadth, and also by the special resistance which it is believed that her peculiar form will offer to the water. The other design has also great breadth, and has large side-keels, to resist rolling, but relies chiefly upon the mechanical arrangement of the hanging-saloon for the pre-

vention of sea-sickness. The saloon is an independent structure, placed in the middle of the ship, and is supported by means of an axis or shaft, which rests upon bearings secured to the vessel, and bedded upon india-rubber. It is capable of turning upon its axis through a limited angle, as large as the inclination of the ship is likely to be in a seaway. It is to be seventy feet long, thirty wide, and twenty high, and will have a promenade deck above, and attached to it. It is intended that, however much the ship rolls, the saloon is to be free from motion. This is secured by an apparatus which is placed under the control of a steersman, who sits with a spirit-level before him, the slightest deviation of which from the vertical it is his duty to instantly correct. The force under the control of the steersman is applied by hydraulic machinery, by which the readiest means is afforded of applying great motive-power in any required gradations. Mr Bessemer contemplates eventually superseding the steersman by purely automatic machinery. We have said that the saloon is to be placed amidships, in the portion of the ship usually occupied by the machinery and boilers: its inmates will thus experience a *minimum* of the pitching motion, which is still further to be reduced by a peculiar feature in the design of the ship—her bow and stern are intended to have a deck a small distance above the water, with only a railing round it, so that the steamer will go through, instead of over, all but very large waves. Since the saloon occupies the centre of the vessel, it is considered necessary to have two separate sets of engines and paddle-wheels, one set at a short distance from each end of the saloon. It has been said that the water from one pair of paddle-wheels will impair the efficiency of the others. There can be little doubt, however, that this point has been thoroughly investigated by the eminent naval architect who has charge of the design, and an allowance made accordingly in the estimated speed, which has been stated at twenty miles an hour. The Bessemer boats are to have head and stern alike, with a rudder at each end, in order that they may not have to turn round: an arrangement of this kind must be adopted in all large steamers intended to use the present harbours. We should add that the india-rubber bedding upon which the saloon rests is intended to isolate it from the vibration of the ship caused by the machinery.

It appears pretty certain that many years will not pass before something is done to improve the Channel passage; and although it can hardly be hoped that any of the schemes which are likely to be carried out will entirely dispose of sea-sickness, it may be confidently predicted that much of the inconvenience, loss of time, and unpleasantness at present involved in a voyage from England to the continent, is in a fair way of being remedied. It has been suggested that the difficulty attending the transfer of luggage from trains to boat, and *vice versa*, may be got over by making the railway truck in two parts, the lower consisting merely of the wheels and frame, the upper being a box which could be lifted off by a steam-crane, deposited in the hold of the steamer, and again lifted on to a truck on the other side, the customs' examination being made in transit. It might be possible also to have, instead of the present awkward landing-stage, a covered pier-platform capable of being

raised and lowered, so that the passengers would have merely to step on to it from the railway carriage, and then, all being lowered together, they would step into the steamer.

A FAMILY LEGEND.

IN his recently published work, *The Rise of Great Families*, Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, tells a legendary story regarding a branch of a Norman family, named Payen, in the island of Jersey. Why the family was so called, needs some preliminary historical explanation, which we shall give in our own way.

When the Romans under Cæsar, about half a century before the commencement of the Christian era, took possession of Gaul, they set to work to root out Druidism, and to introduce their fanciful Italian and Greek mythology. In this, from the temperament of the people, they were so eminently successful, that, on the introduction of Christianity, four centuries afterwards, the natives in various rural districts persistently clung for hundreds of years to the worship of Jupiter, Minerva, and other gods and goddesses of Olympus; and in such quarters, even when this form of faith had substantially departed, its shadow was still observable in frivolous traditional usages and holiday amusements. Of course, this lingering attachment to the ancient superstition did not here, more than elsewhere, escape a degree of persecution. Treated with contumely, the sturdy old heathens were in Italy styled *pagani*, and in France *payen*—a term literally signifying dwellers in rural districts, and derived from the Latin *pagus*, the country. From the word *pagus* come the modern French terms *pays* and *paysan*, and the English words pagan and peasant. All this is well known to philologists, but it is less generally understood that from the same source sprung the Norman surname Payen, whence the English names Payne and Payn.

In the nooks and bye-corners of Normandy and adjoining islands, paganism, as we now call it, drew out a protracted existence even till the tenth century; it had, however, become rather attenuated. When Duke William landed on our shores to fight the battle of Hastings, he may have brought followers named Payen, but it is doubtful if at that time, 1066, there existed a single pagan in Normandy or the Channel Islands. During the maniacal fervour of the Crusades, the whole pagan system probably vanished throughout France and Italy. A notice of the Crusades brings us to Sir Bernard Burke's story, which we shall try to condense.

According to the account given, one of the lieutenants of Richard Cour-de-Lion was a Hugh Payen, who aided in founding the Order of the Temple, and there was a Thibaut Payen, afterwards Count of Gisors, who had a high place of trust in Normandy under Henry I. of England. Members of the family afterwards settled in Spain, Portugal, and England; one belonging to the English branch being reckoned among the cavaliers who colonised Virginia. In early times, a member of the elder branch of the Norman Payens settled in Jersey, and originated one of the aristocratic families in the island, which, in the reign of Charles I. was represented by Abraham and his brother Stephen Payne, both staunch Royalists.

When Charles II. and his brother, James, Duke of York, visited Jersey during their wanderings, they were handsomely entertained and escorted about by Colonel Stephen Payne, whose wife, Madame Payne, was about to present her first-born to her husband, when the two princes left the island for France. On departure, the duke expressed a desire to be godfather to the child if it should prove to be a boy, to which the colonel very gladly assented.

Great, accordingly, was the disappointment of the father when the infant proved to be a daughter. Overcome by pride and mortification, he in the heat of passion gave loose to such maledictions against the hapless mother and her babe as greatly distressed Douce Vardon, an old female retainer of the family, who acted as *sage-femme* on the occasion. Troubled in mind, the poor woman, on retiring to rest, invoked the presence and counsel of Ro, or Rollo, a patron saint of the islanders. This species of invocation, known as the 'Clameur de Haro,' is an ancient superstition among the insular descendants of the Normans, which till this day has not quite disappeared. The vision of Rollo—possibly nothing more than the result of a disturbed dream—was not denied. Like the 'Bodach Glas' of certain Highland chieftains, or the 'Banshee' of some old Irish families, Rollo made his appearance to foretell family disaster. He commissioned her to announce to Stephen Payne, as a token of Heaven's displeasure at his impious wrath upon the birth of a daughter, that the child would die in infancy; 'and further, that neither he, nor any one descended from him, would ever again be blessed with a daughter's love!'

The message was delivered; and as some evidence of its truth, the infant soon after sickened and died. What followed will best be given in the words, and on the authority of Ulster King of Arms: 'That Heaven is merciful, Stephen Payne experienced in his own person; for his wife subsequently presented him with a son who was sponsored by the Duke of York by proxy; but Stephen died somewhat a disappointed man, as the volatile Charles II. omitted him, by some strange oversight, from among that host of retainers who shared the monarch's good fortune at the Restoration. Six generations of the descendants of Colonel Stephen Payne have come and gone since the period of this "over true tale," but they never yet have had a daughter born to them. So strongly is the immutability of this decree felt, even now, by the family, that a scion of it, still under his first *lustrum*, was actually named six months before his birth! To the reader, however, shall be left the point whether the veritable incidents of this narration are to be accounted for by an hypothesis less romantic than the "mid-wife's curse;" or whether, leaving elucidation aside as impossible, one must simply add it as another incident to the many which have preceded it, in proving that, indeed, "Truth is stranger than fiction."

It is not pleasant to raise any question regarding a legend which purports to be 'stranger than fiction;' the probability, however, is, that the whole thing is mythical—that is to say, in order to account for certain circumstances occurring in the history of a family, an incident purely fictitious is gradually invented, and becomes matter of

popular credence. We are pretty confident that, if Sir Bernard Burke were to look about, he would have no difficulty in discovering cases of a constant succession of sons to the exclusion of daughters occurring in particular families for several generations. We admit, nevertheless, that, myth or no myth, his story is worth the space we have assigned to it.

W. C.

M A R I A N.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Marian Keir left school and came to live with her aunt—her mother's half-sister, and her only surviving relation—she was full of gratitude for the home thus generously provided for her, full of happiness at the idea of escaping the destiny to which she had been looking forward—that of becoming an assistant-governess in the school, with the smallest of salaries and largest share of work—and full of enthusiastic desire to repay her aunt's kindness by such devotion and affection as must win the love of which as yet Miss Gilmour had given no sign, beyond a grudging half-yearly payment of her orphan niece's school-bills. Before she had been six months at Holly Bank, these feelings had become considerably modified. Before the first year of her residence under her aunt's roof was over, she had often wished herself back in the schoolroom she had been so impatient to leave—back, with the tiresome lessons, and walks, and practisings; practisings, and walks, and lessons—back, teaching the stupidest of the girls to stumble through the irregular French verbs, or putting the drawers of the untidy ones in order, or mending the little ones' clothes—back, amidst all the fatigues and worries, and fun and bustle of school-life, with its feuds and friendships, and constant, if petty flow of interests and sympathies. Yes, it would be better to be even an overworked under-governess, than to live day after day, week after week, in never-varying thralldom to one despotic will, in hourly observance of the capricious humours of a morose-tempered old woman, in constant experience of the hopelessness of eliciting a hearty, genial expression of satisfaction with any effort she might make to please her.

For if school had seemed a dull place to the naturally bright-spirited girl, whose childhood had chanced to be a happy one, Holly Bank was ineffably duller. It was neither town nor country; it was utterly ugly and dreary to look at, with its high surrounding walls, square mean-looking house, ill-kept bit of vegetable ground, and gloomy, stiff clumps of boxwood and hollies, the very berries on which were dingy white, instead of cheerful Christmas red. Inside the house, things looked still more forlorn. The little parlour in which Miss Gilmour always chose to sit was not a bad room, and might have been made snug and pleasant enough. But Marian's first unthinking attempts to introduce a little colour and cheerfulness into her aunt's sanctum, though all she had done was to alter the position of a chair or two, and put some wild-flowers she had gathered—garden flowers there were none at Holly Bank—on the bare square table, were greeted with such indignant disdain, that she never dared to repeat the experiment; and if she still gathered wild-flowers, took care to hide them in her own little attic. In

this dreary parlour the days and evenings were spent—those evenings excepted on which Miss Gilmour received such guests as alone were invited to her house, and whom she chose, not because she cared for their society, but because they were obsequiously eager to court hers. They were Whiteford people; but the Whiteford aristocracy would have been as shy of meeting these favoured visitors of hers as she herself, in her secret haughty pride of birth, was reluctant to mix on equal terms with the wives and families of rich Whiteford mill-owners, whose pedigrees in general mounted up no higher than a meritorious grandfather. With these well-to-do, contented, and consequential folk, the reserved, dull, shabby, little old woman had no sympathy, and desired to have no communication. A few of them had, soon after her taking up her abode at Holly Bank, called on her, and made her somewhat patronising, though civilly meant overtures of friendship, the fashion of which had so displeased her, that when Marian came to live with her, she found that her aunt neither visited nor was visited by anybody, except a few persons of a much lower social position than herself, but who were, therefore, the more ready to treat her with the deference which she considered her due, and to echo all her peculiar religious views. Marian was soon disgusted with this species of society. The evenings alone with her aunt were bad enough; but the tea-parties which Miss Gilmour now and then gave to her co-religionists and disciples were far worse, and only made the companionless girl feel doubly solitary and friendless.

Her aunt's indifference to her was also hard to bear. Miss Gilmour did not mean to be unkind, but she had not liked Marian's mother, and professed no love for her child. She was her niece, and she fed, and clothed, and kept her, and taught her, as she expressed it, how to make herself useful, though she never allowed that she had any particular reason to value her usefulness. As for any feeling of mere family affection, all the family affection Miss Gilmour had to bestow had been long ago centered on another protégé, one who bore her own family name, of which she was not a little proud, and whom she meant to be her heir.

When Marian had spent about a year—and what a long year it had been!—at Holly Bank, there came a delightful break in the monotony of her life. Neil Gilmour, who was in a merchant's office in London, came to pay his cousin and patroness a visit; and the latter suddenly took it into her head to make a match between him and Marian Keir. The young man was ready enough to enter into her views. Marian was pretty and pleasant, and, he believed, quite as likely to succeed to a share of her aunt's fortune as he himself was to get the whole of it. As for her, it required little persuasion to make her believe herself in love with the first man who had spoken of love to her, and who had really shewn her some kindness, and done his best to make her days pass more happily. They became engaged, and it was settled that their marriage should take place on his return from America, whither he was first to go on some business connected with Miss Gilmour's property. Months passed, however, and his return was still delayed. Then his letters became unsatisfactory, and by-and-by the discovery was made that the money which he had gone to America to recover

had been lost again by him in some gambling speculation. Miss Gilmour was bitterly indignant, for she loved her money, though she could spend it freely enough on her own favourite schemes, and in her anger, she declared that the engagement between him and Marian should be broken off. Then, after a while, a letter came from him, penitent and despairing, asking her forgiveness, and Marian's intercession on his behalf, promising to endeavour to restore the money, and—asking for more, wherewith to embark in some fresh venture. Miss Gilmour returned a harsh refusal to this request, and again declared that there should be no marriage with her niece. But now Marian, whose heart was not so hardened against her contrite lover, wrote to assure him of her constancy, and to promise that she would do what she could to soften her aunt. This was a mistake on her part. Miss Gilmour ought to have been left to tire of her resentment. Marian's unwise remonstrances only nourished it. In the meantime, no answer was returned to her own tender comforting letter; and at last, as months and years passed on, and nothing was heard of the absentee, she began to feel that her engagement was as good as broken, whether she wished to break it or not.

But the fact remained that she had not broken it off. If Neil Gilmour was alive, she was still engaged to marry him, even though her aunt might refuse to agree to the marriage. To the idea of this still existing link between them she continued to cling long after she had ceased to pine impatiently for his return. She still hoped and prayed that he would come back, and sighed, and even shed tears sometimes over the possibility of his death. She still believed that she loved him truly, or, at least, that she was ready joyfully to fulfil the promise she had given him, whenever he returned to claim it. She thought that she was very weary of waiting for him—perhaps she was only very weary of her present life, from which there now remained to her so little prospect of escape.

This was the state of matters with Marian when she had chanced to become acquainted with Mrs Richardson, and to meet the people who visited at her house, and amongst them, Frank Crawford.

CHAPTER IV.

On the morning following the day of the bazaar, Marian was sent by her aunt on an errand to a house some distance off. She had to inquire about the character of a servant; and the commission being one not at all easy of execution, for Miss Gilmour was hard to satisfy in such affairs, she set out on her expedition with some trepidation, though she was glad of the walk, and glad to get away for a little from the suspicious questions which her aunt kept putting to her regarding the Crawford family, and the reason of Lady Augusta's remarkable civility to her the day before. She had parried these questions as well as she could, not, however, from any unwillingness to confide in her aunt; she longed to tell her all that had taken place. She wanted advice and comfort, and though she was not likely to get much of the last, she felt that even her hard, unsympathising aunt was a confidante, better than no confidante at all; for Marian's nature was in some respects a weak one, and she

had never yet mastered—perhaps she never would master, that half-childish craving for support and sympathy, which is at once charming to meet with, and dangerous to possess. She was unhappy and dissatisfied with herself, and she wanted to confess herself to somebody, even though the confession might bring her severe penance in the form of one of Miss Gilmour's sharp lectures. She would have borne that patiently, for she felt that she deserved something of the kind for her indiscretion; and though her aunt might scold her for her encouragement of Mr Crawford, she would surely understand better than Lady Augusta could do how innocently the error had been committed. Perhaps she might even be able, in her superior wisdom (for Marian was humble enough to believe in the wisdom of her elders), to suggest some way of making the Crawfords themselves understand her conduct better, her own explanation yesterday to Lady Augusta having been so brief and abrupt. How often, during the hours which had passed since, had she longed to have those few minutes of the drive over again! How much more she could have said—how much better she could have managed her confession! But now there was little, if any chance of her meeting that kind Lady Augusta again. To write to her seemed impossible; and so her gratitude, her regret, her remorse for the trouble she had given to those persons whom she was most desirous of pleasing, must remain unknown to them. She would have been glad enough, therefore, to have consulted her aunt. But a certain feeling of loyalty towards the very people with whom she was not likely to have anything more to do, and who would perhaps only think and speak hardly and unjustly of her, made her resolve to keep the secret of Frank Crawford's intended proposal. Miss Gilmour was sometimes inclined to gossip a little with the servant, who had been with her for several years, and it was probable enough that she would have spoken of such a thing as this. So Marian was determined to be silent. As she walked on alone this morning, she wondered how she was to have patience and courage to bear the dreariness of the life, which had been dreary enough before, but which had at least been peaceful. The peacefulness had all gone out of her heart now, and yet she must conceal from her aunt the restless misery that possessed her. She must be as ready as before to perform with cheerfulness her monotonous daily duties; she must speak when she longed to be silent, and be silent when she was yearning to speak. For how long was it to go on? When would Neil Gilmour come back? Then a shudder passed through her. Did she wish him to come back now?

She performed her present errand, not, probably, to her aunt's satisfaction, as she thought uneasily when she was on her way back. But when she had been ostensibly listening to the details regarding the new cook's capabilities, manners, and morals, into which she had been charged so strictly to inquire, her mind had been wandering back to her drive yesterday, and she had been thinking of what she ought to have said to Lady Augusta. If she could have had yesterday over again! She was startled at finding herself returning to Holly Bank with a very confused recollection of the answers she had received on many of the points which she had been enjoined to investigate searchingly. 'Aunt Sarah will tell me I am of no use

to her, as she does so often,' she said to herself despondingly. 'I really don't think I am of much use to her, after all. She could do without me quite well. She has Barbara—she values her a great deal more than she values me. She does not care to have me.' The tears rose to her eyes. She thought of what Lady Augusta had said to her: 'I am longing to have you with me.' Ah, why could she not go where she was sure of such a welcome?

She tried to prepare herself to face patiently the other sort of welcome which she expected, as soon as her aunt began her catechism upon the business from which she had returned. A less conscientious and more skilful envoy might easily have devised safe and satisfactory answers to the frivolous questions which the fidgety old woman had desired her to ask, though she probably would have hesitated to ask them herself. But Marian never tried to cheat her aunt out of any suit or service, however useless or disagreeable; and now, though, in her present nervous, depressed mood, she seemed to quail more than usually before the anticipated scolding, she began, as soon as she was in the parlour, where Miss Gilmour sat awaiting her, a faithful report of her mission, with its successes and failures. To her surprise, she was heard without interruption, and without her aunt turning round on her with even a reproachful look.

'That'll do,' said the old lady briefly, when she had finished. Marian, relieved and astonished, and easily affected by any unexpected mildness or indulgence, was beginning to apologise again for her partial negligence.

'I am very sorry, Aunt Sarah, that I forgot to ask about the woman's church, and her dress on Sundays, and'—

'Don't plague me more about the cook now; I've other things to think of. A pretty way you've treated me, Marian Keir! This is all the return I get from you for all I've done for you. This is how you deceive me.'

'Deceive you, aunt! I've told you everything.' 'Told me everything! Have you told me that you refused an offer only yesterday?'

Marian stood speechless.

'Yes, you thought to keep it from me. Here; look here.' She held up a little parcel which Marian had brought away with her from the bazaar, but had never missed or thought of till now. 'You left this in the Crawfords' carriage yesterday. Young Mr Crawford brought it here this morning. He's been gone only a few minutes, and he'—

'Mr Crawford!' Marian echoed, trembling, flushing, hardly able to stand. Miss Gilmour looked at her sharply.

'Ay, you may well look ashamed of yourself. Well, well, sit down, child. I've promised that I would speak to you quietly. He wanted to stay and see you, but I sent him away.'

'O Aunt Sarah, why did you do that? You sent him away, and I would give anything, anything, only to see him, to speak to him for one minute! O why, why did you not let him stay?' She clasped her hands, and burst into tears. She could control herself no longer. To lose this opportunity of explaining everything, of speaking to him perhaps for the last time! It was too hard.

'You silly lassie,' said Miss Gilmour, with a shrewd, curious look of satisfaction, though her

tone was as harsh as usual. Is it young Mr Crawford of Ellisdale, or his brother, that you wish to speak to? His brother, I'm thinking; and it's the other one who was here just now. So there, dry your eyes, and don't make a fool of yourself. Why didn't you tell me what you had done yesterday? And I'd like to know what business you had to do anything without my knowledge. Answer me that.'

But Marian did not answer. She was weeping still, but quietly. The nature of her disappointment was changed, but it was even more vexing to her to think that it was not Frank who had come desiring to see her, and that she had been in reality clinging to a foolish hope. Of course, after what she had told his mother and sister yesterday, and which they would lose no time in communicating to him, he would be inclined to avoid, rather than to seek her. She might have known that.

In the meantime, she scarcely observed the strangeness of her aunt's manner—its imperiousness and nervousness—the mingled agitation and triumph in her face. But suddenly, as, with a gesture of kindness which Marian had only met once before from her, she laid her hand on the girl's shoulder, as if to soothe her, she became aware, that in spite of her hard words, her aunt meant to be gentle with her, and with a quick fresh burst of tears, she sank her brow upon the dry, withered old hand that was shaking with excitement.

'Aunt Sarah! I will tell you everything,' she said; 'only—you won't speak of it? They—the Crawfords would not like'—

'Pshaw! What is it I'm not to speak of? I've agreed to your marriage; I've settled it all with Mr Crawford—he's a very prudent, sensible-like person, and I've said that his brother may come out here to-day. If I'm satisfied with him, you may see him and speak to him as much as you like. And as to what you said to Lady Augusta yesterday—he—he need never know it. Mr Crawford will settle all that, he says. And as to your not telling me—I didn't expect it of you, Marian, after what I've done for you; but we'll say no more about it. There!—and she gave Marian a short, uncomfortable, but, for her, a wonderfully cordial kiss. 'Go and take off that old hat, and change your dress. Mr Crawford was going straight into Whiteford to see his brother, and I daresay he'll not be long about coming out here when he knows what I've said.' Here the satisfaction and triumph again seemed to prevail. 'You'll be a fortunate girl, Marian; but what would have become of you if it hadn't been for your old aunt—though you may think little of all I've done for you? Ay, and the Crawfords may thank me too. For as high as they hold themselves, it's not everywhere they could have found a girl who'll be as welcome at Ellisdale as you'll be. I know something of their affairs—more, maybe, than Mr Everard Crawford fancies. His wife is an heiress, they say: you'll be a better heiress yet—if you please me. So mind, Marian—though I'm not saying that I'm not pleased that you're to marry into a good family—I never liked your taking up with the Richardsons and these halfin Whiteford folks; I would have you shew the Crawfords and Lady Augusta herself, that you remember you're my niece, and that your mother was a Gilmour.'

'Aunt Sarah, have you forgotten'—said Marian in a slow, faltering tone, after a long minute's silence, during which Miss Gilmour had been nervously pretending to busy herself with some papers on the desk before her.

'Have I forgotten what?' She had opened the upper part of the desk, and in her nervous fidgeting had pulled out a small packet from amongst the other papers it contained, which she now hastily pushed back again. Marian, who was watching her, gave a slight exclamation.

'You have kept his letters! Ah! I thought you had burned them. Aunt Sarah, I haven't anything; you know he never wrote to me. I asked you once to let me see his last letter again, and you wouldn't. Oh, give it me now!' I am engaged to him; you know I am engaged to him still. I think, if I were to see what he had written once more'—She stopped, trembling and panting, and held out her hand for the letters, while yet she averted her face, as if she hardly dared to look at them. It was as if she were waiting in impatient desperation for the lover to whom she had given her promise, to appear and claim her from the one to whom she had given her heart. But no such interference was to come to the aid of her fast failing resolution.

'You've nothing to do with his letters now!' muttered her aunt sternly; and then, as Marian still held out her hand, and half hid her eyes with the other, she heard a rustle and a hasty blaze, and knew that poor Neil Gilmour's letters, which she had not suspected of being still in her aunt's possession, were destroyed at last. Yet she did not know that one—that very last one which she had begged so hard to see—was still safe in another and still more secret repository of Miss Gilmour's treasures. She looked up now, with a start and a gasp—perhaps of relief—but yet the destruction of Neil's letters seemed at first only to revive the old almost forgotten memories of the brief time when his presence with her had made her happy.

'I am engaged to him still. I told him so; I promised I would not forget him. Aunt Sarah, you know I promised!'

'I know you disobeyed me when you wrote that letter to him. You promised! What right had you to promise anything against my will? And—and—what's the use of your promise?' The sharp, harsh voice suddenly broke in a way that Marian had scarcely ever heard before. 'What's the use of saying you're engaged to him still? It's—it's four years since he went away.'

'But he may come back. He will come back some day, aunt,' said Marian soothingly; forgetting for a moment to question her own feelings under the effect which the rare sight of her aunt's emotion produced on her; for in spite of having had her demonstrations of affection so often and so coldly repulsed, her heart still clung with a sort of childish trustfulness to her one relation and protectress—her dead mother's sister; and in defiance of all Miss Gilmour's contempt for sympathy and sentiment, she often felt a tender pity for the gloomy, lonely old woman, whose life had, she knew, been embittered by many disappointments.

'He'll not come back! Come back! What would bring him back now? Didn't I tell him he shouldn't marry you, and that I would—Child, leave me alone.' She shook off Marian's hand, but

rather in impatience than in unkindness. 'Why do you talk to me of him? Go away, I say. Go to your room, and—and'—

'Aunt Sarah, I promised him that I would try to get you to forgive him. Ah, you couldn't have kept his letters for so long if you did not mean to forgive him at last.' The girl's voice was very low, and she had become very pale. She knew now—she could no longer hide from herself that her heart quailed at the thought of Neil Gilmour's return. But selfishly to refrain from seizing this opportunity of pleading for him was far from her mind, even while, forgetting the difficulty, if not impossibility of summoning the exile home, in their ignorance of what had become of him, she was asking herself in dismay what she should do if her intercession proved successful. Unwittingly, however, she had used an argument which stirred up Miss Gilmour's stubborn pride. What business had her niece or anybody to pry into her secret feelings and intentions, and to judge the motives which had induced her to keep these letters?

'Forgive him! Why should I forgive him? Has he done what he promised? Has he paid me back my money?' she said angrily, passing her handkerchief roughly over her eyes, and then stuffing it back into her pocket, as if resolved to betray no more signs of relenting.

'He may have been unfortunate. Who knows how hard he may have been struggling all this time? Who knows—O Aunt Sarah, sometimes I think that perhaps—Surely he would have written again, if he had been alive.'

There was a silence; Miss Gilmour had turned away her face.

'You think, maybe, he would have written to you?' she said presently; and in her agitation, for it was the first time she had ventured to speak of the probability of his death, Marian did not catch the tone of jealous bitterness in her aunt's low muttered words.

'Yes,' she said simply, 'I think he would. He knew that I had not quarrelled with him. O aunt, sometimes, when I think about it, I feel almost sure that he is—dead. And if he is'—she was fairly sobbing now—'surely you won't think hardly of him any longer. I believe that he did mean to pay back that money; and I am certain that when he wrote that last letter to you'—she glanced sadly at the fire—'he was longing to get you to forgive and trust him once more.'

'Yes, he wanted more money.'

'If he had only wanted more money, would he not have written again? Wouldn't he at least have written to me? There was no reason why he should have been unwilling to write to me and answer my letter. But—if he never got my letter—you know what I mean—or if he was not able to answer it—Sometimes I have dreamed that news had come to us, sure news, that he had gone away on that wild fur-trading expedition, and'—She stopped.

'Well? Go on. What more?'

'Aunt Sarah, if he went, as I believe he did go, on that expedition—he called it "a forlorn-hope," do you remember?—oh, would you not wish to feel that, whatever may have happened to him, you have no anger against him now? Remember how you felt towards him once.'

'Girl, what right have you to stand up and lecture me! You who owe me everything! But

it's the same story: everybody turns against me. There's gratitude nowhere!

'Hush, hush, aunt!' Marian said, shocked by the sudden outburst of querulous sobs which accompanied the broken sentences. 'I will do anything to please you. I am not ungrateful to you. I do owe you everything. Ah! if you would only believe that he was not ungrateful either!'

'He was—he was! You'll not make me think he wasn't. And for you—what are you going to do now? You're going to refuse to marry as I want you to do—to refuse the only match that I care you should make—to throw yourself away perhaps on somebody in Whiteford! What is it to you whether you marry to please me or not? And you're all I have now—the last of my kin, and if I die to-morrow, my name will be forgotten.'

'No, it will not. Do you think I'll forget you?'

'You! I wasn't thinking of you. You're but a girl. If you had been married! But though you know that I want to see you married, you pretend that you can't accept this offer, that there isn't a girl in Whiteford but would be proud of! And you talk to me of my being hard and unjust! Haven't I had provocation enough, and now you're giving me more.—What's that?'

It was the sound of wheels, rapidly approaching. Marian started up. Miss Gilmour hurried to the window.

'It's Mr Crawford come back from Whiteford,' she said, her irritation quickly changing into nervous flurry, as the dog-cart, which had driven from the door about an hour ago, reappeared in the little avenue. 'Marian, Marian, stay where you are!'

Marian had been on the point of fleeing from the room; but her aunt's cry, rather appealing than commanding, made her stop. Miss Gilmour, indeed, always lost her self-possession on the approach of an unaccustomed visitor; and though Everard Crawford's tact and urbanity had wonderfully helped on his introduction of himself and his business to her that morning, and even made her not unwilling to see him again, all her hermit shyness returned with the sound of the returning wheels.

'Stop, Marian; I desire you. Mr Crawford will be wanting to see you. What—who's that?' as the dog-cart whirled to the door, and a tall, strange young man sprang from it, hardly waiting for the horse to be pulled up, in his eagerness to alight.

'It's not Mr Crawford; it's— Aunt Sarah, let me go! Oh, I cannot see him yet.'

'But I don't know him. I—I— Stop, Marian,' Miss Gilmour held Marian's arm tight, and looked helplessly at the door. She had caught a glimpse of Frank Crawford's face, glad and triumphant, for the impetuous young man, breaking away from his discreet brother's lecture on the most advisable way of approaching the odd-tempered old lady, whom it was so necessary to propitiate, and thinking only of the joy of seeing Marian, had almost forgotten that such a person existed as her aunt, or only thought of her as the benevolent genius who had helped him to this precious interview, but whom it did not occur to him that there was any reason for his meeting also.

He little knew the peril into which that cheery face of his had nearly put all his prospects. Miss Gilmour saw it, and a sudden shock seemed to be given to all her own cherished expectations. She had been flattered by the judicious Everard into fancying that every single member of the Crawford family was waiting in trembling anxiety for her decision as to Frank's proposals. And, of course, the most anxious and trembling of all must be the lover himself. Miss Gilmour had been secretly exulting in the anticipation of the homage which would be paid her to win her consent to her niece's marriage, or, at least, of the deferential gratitude with which her consent would be welcomed, and though her discussion with Marian had broken the thread of these self-complacent fancies, and infused a considerable amount of bitterness into her cup of satisfaction, she was in reality tolerably certain of overcoming the girl's scruples and carrying her point; and in spite of her irritation with her, was still pleased with the idea of the approaching interview with young Crawford, whom she designed to treat very much as she treated her dependent orphan niece. And now, instead of a meek, bashful youth, whose elder brother had to open the way for his suit, and whom she could lecture and snub as she pleased, here was a tall, broad-chested, long-whiskered man, twice as big as Everard Crawford, and as bold, jovial, and confident-looking as the other was subdued and insinuating. The very sound of his pleasant, hearty voice, as he asked, in clear unhesitating tones, for 'Miss Keir,' completed the discomfiture of Miss Gilmour's preconceived notions respecting her intended nephew, and she stood trembling with mingled fright and a sort of indignation, as the firm, steady step was heard nearing the parlour-door.

Marian had seen him too, and the effect produced on her was also in its way decisive. The first shy, girlish impulse which had prompted her to run away had passed. She stood still, erect, and unshrinking, and the joyousness on her lover's face seemed to be reflected on her own. He was come; and his living, cheering, substantial presence seemed to stand between her and that dark shadowy background of former days which had been clouding everything—even the very discovery that she was so beloved. For the moment, at least, her doubts and scruples seemed to have been suddenly swept away. The sun had shone out, and the fogs and vapours were gone.

But there was no time to think of anything, except of the critical moment just at hand; and as she glanced down at the face of the nervous old woman who stood by her side, still clutching her arm, as if to prevent her deserting her, it suddenly became evident to her that her aunt was shrinking from the coming audience far more than herself—that something was again jarring on her temper, and that she was unconsciously assuming her stiffest and least gracious air. What if she made herself disagreeable to Frank, after all!

'O aunt! you promised you would be pleased,' Marian whispered hurriedly, scarcely knowing what she was saying, and then stopped, for Frank was in the room.